Evidence for a symptom exaggeration scale on a measure of pathological personality traits

INTRODUCTION:
• People with high levels of pathological personality characteristics are at high risk of distorting their responses on tests of their psychological functioning.
• Recent research on pathological personality trait assessment has thus focused on indices of test-takers’ response validity.
• One such index is the Infrequency scale (INF) of the Computerized Adaptive Test of Personality Disorder (CAT–PD), a well validated test of pathological traits.
• The CAT-PD-INF measures extreme and bizarre responses to personality items that may reflect response exaggeration.
• However, it has not yet been validated.
• In this study we examine how the CAT-PD-INF compares with the validity scales from another established test of pathological personality.

METHOD
• Participants were 363 workers on Amazon’s MTurk.
• We compared the CAT-PD-INF to select validity scales from the Schedule for Nonadaptive and Adaptive Personality-2 (SNAP-2): Deviance (DEV), Rare Virtues (RV) and Variable Response Inconsistency (VRIN).

RESULTS
• CAT-PD-INF correlated higher with SNAP-2-DEV than with either SNAP-2-RV or SNAP-2-VRIN (r ≥ 9.67).
• ROC analysis suggested a cut score of 23 on CAT-PD-INF discriminated between deviant and non-deviant responses.

DISCUSSION
• These findings suggest the convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity of the CAT-PD-INF scale.
• This study provides preliminary evidence for the CAT-PD-INF as a predictor of response exaggeration.
• Future research can extend these findings by examining the predictive validity of the CAT-PD-INF with respect to a sample in which respondents deliberately feign their answers to questions.